SIXTH
SERMON

Preach'd before the

King and Queen,

IN

Their MAJESTIES Chappel at St. *James*'s, upon the first *Wednesday* in *Lent*, Febr. 24. 1685.

By the Reverend Father *Dom. PH. ELLIS*, Monk of the Holy Order of S. *Benedict*, and of the *English* Congr.

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Viri *Ninivitæ* ſurgent in judicio cum generatione iſta, & condemnabunt eam: quia pœnitentiam egerunt in predicatione Jonæ. *Matth.* 12. 41.

The Men of Ninive ſhall riſe at the Day of Judgment, againſt this Generation, and condemn it; becauſe they repented at the Preaching of Jonas. Matth. 12. 41.

THE Holy Fathers (moſt Sacred Majeſty) taking a general View of the ſinful World, and diving into the Cauſes of its Irregularities and Corruptions, divide Sinners into

three Classes or Degrees. The First consists of such as offend out of *Ignorance*, proceeding from a criminal neglect either of their own, or of their *Teachers*. The Second is composed of such as fall through *Infirmity* and Inadvertence; whose Lapses are less hurtful, and more easily recovered. In the last are ranged the *Impenitent* and Obdurate, who wanting neither Knowledge of their Duty, nor Divine Assistance to comply with it; neither Strength to stand firm, nor Grace to recover their footing when they are down, stretch themselves on the Ground, fall asleep in the Mire, rest because they will not Think, and owe their *Ease* to their *Insensibility*.

To the First sort of these Men we *Preach*, that they may be enlightned; For the Second we *Pray*, that they may be strengthned; But the Last, says St. *Augustine*, we turn over to the Justice of God, *as sinning against the Holy Ghost*: for, *Such as will not shake hands with their Errors and darling Vices*, says St. Bernard, *will not stretch forth their Arms to embrace the Truth when it presents it self before them*, are seised with a mortal

Aug. in Enchir. cap. 38.

Bern. Serm. 2. *Advent.*

mortal Lethargy, nay with obſtinacy of Devils, *Obſtinatione Diabolica*; and *It is a folly*, adds *Hugo* of S. *Victor*, *to go about to Convert them*; *Obſtinatos corripere inſipientia eſt.* Indeed the Scripture warns us that it is a hard Province; *Perverſi difficile corriguntur.* But while the Holy Ghoſt only declares it very difficult to reduce the Obſtinate to a ſenſe of their Miſery, the ſame words that ſeem to diſencourage the *Undertaking*, gives hopes of the *Succeſs.* For tho' we read of a *Nabal* ſo inebriated with Wine and Pleaſures, that neither the peaceful Admonitions of a friendly *David* could perſwade, nor the Power of an incenſed Enemy could terrifie him, when Deſtruction was almoſt at his Gates: Tho' we read of a *Pharaoh* ſo infatuated with Pride and Preſumption, that neither the ſmooth Tongue of *Aaron*, nor the rough Hand of *Moſes*; neither the *Eloquence* of the one, nor the *Chaſtiſing Rod* of the other, could mollifie him, when the Judgments of God pour'd in upon him like a Torrent: In fine, tho' in this *Goſpel* we behold one of the moſt aſtoniſhing Pieces of *Obduracy* in the

Hugo Victorin. de Inſt. Novit. cap. 14.

Eccle. 1.15.

the *Jews*, who after a Devil ejected out of a Poſſeſſed Perſon, and this before their eyes, and this demonſtrated to be performed by the Power of God, ſtill call for a *Sign*: Yet after all theſe Diſencouragements, I will not deſpair of this *Generation*, ſince a *Ninive* was converted at the Preaching of *Jonas*; ſince a *Ninive* not only *did Pennance in Sackcloth and Aſhes*, but alſo Preaches it to this Generation, before ſhe riſe in Judgment againſt it. If I ſhould compare *this Generation* to the *Ninivites*; this *Metropolis* of our Kingdom, to that Head and Seat of the Famous *Aſſyrian Monarchy*, it might be a Complement in any other Subject then that of *Impiety*: But if the Compariſon were drawn upon the Reſemblance of our Lives, it would reliſh too much of the Satyr; and therefore neither to diſguſt nor diſencourage my Audience, I am deſirous to make the *Parallel* upon our *Repentance*. *Secutus es errantem, ſequere pœnitentem*, ſaid once a great *Preacher* to a great *Offender*, but a more Illuſtrious *Penitent*. If we have tranſcrib'd the Lives of the *Ninivites* with all their Faults, let us not be

be aſham'd to correct and blot out the *Errata*: If we have followed cloſe at their Heels in wicked Courſes, let us not be aſham'd to acknowledge *we are tired in the ways of iniquity*, and ſit down with them, if not in *Sackcloth* and *Aſhes*, at leaſt to *repent*. We have the ſame *Opportunity*, it was at a Sermon; the ſame *Neceſſity*, as ſevere Puniſhment threatned, with this addition, that thoſe individual Perſons *ſhall riſe in judgment againſt us*; the ſame *Method* chalk'd out to us, with this advantage, that it was ſucceſsful to them, and will certainly be ſo to us. Their Sorrow was *hearty*, their Pennance was *exemplary*, their Repentance was *ſpeedy*. The laſt of which ſhall be the peculiar Subject of my Second Part: the other Two ſhall be diſcourſed in my Firſt; while I endeavour to bring the Hiſtory of their Converſion home to our ſelves, after I have begged the Aſſiſtance of the *Holy Ghoſt*, the Author of *Repentance*, by the uſual Addreſs to *Innocence*, *Ave Maria*.

Diviſion.

The

The men of Ninive ſhall riſe, &c.

I. IT is obvious to every one within Theſe Walls, that the Son of God made this terrible Commination not only to ſtrike a *Terror* into his Auditors, but alſo to raiſe in them a wholeſom *Confuſion*; not only to reproach their *Stupidity*, but alſo to animate them to a generous Emulation; proteſting, that if the *Niñivites* could not be an Example to provoke their Repentance, they ſhould one day become their invincible Accuſers. And to what end do's our Holy Mother the Church yearly repeat this Paſſage of the Goſpel, and daily inculcate the Senſe of it, but to invite her Children to an Imitation, as the only Plea remaining, as the only Defence we can make againſt ſuch a *cloud of witneſſes*, who will certainly bear us down, and convict us at the Day of Judgment, if they prove not our Inſtruction in this Day of Salvation.

Ninive, the Capital City of the *Aſſyrian* Monarchy, was the *Babylon* of thoſe Times, Emaſculated with a long Peace, Effeminate with

with Eaſe, diſſolv'd in Luxury, Banquetting, and Wantonneſs, under the Reign of a Senſual Prince, a *Sardanapalus*, whoſe Life, ſays the Hiſtorian, was *more ſoft and infamous*, then his Name; *turpior vitâ, quam nomine*; and whoſe Example had ſo corrupted the Manners, and ſtifled the Warlike *Genius* of his People, that they were no longer *formidable*, but for their horrible Exceſſes; no longer *Maſters of the World*, but by drawing others into an imitation of their Crimes; no longer the *Brave Aſſyrians*, but for defying Heaven, and aſſailing the Throne of God, not as their Predeceſſors with the *Tower of Babel*, which they could not finiſh; but with the height and enormity of their Sins, which they brought to a point; *Aſcendit malitia ejus coram me*; *Their wickedneſs is come up before me*; and reaches to Heaven. Now it was high time for *Juſtice* and *Mercy* to enter into deliberation, whether this Seduced People, and Seducer of Nations, ſhould out of hand be converted or deſtroy'd; but while the one was preparing its Thunder Jon. 1. 2.

and Lightning, its Showrs of Fire and Brimſtone, the other diſpatches a *Herald* to warn them of their approaching Ruine. But the Prophet *Jonas*, the Man pitch'd upon to carry the unpleaſant Meſſage, out of a Humane Prudence, and too warm a Zeal, declines the Office. He was unwilling to expoſe his Maſter's Honor, and his own Perſon, among a People where he was like to be ſo little conſider'd, that the *God* was as unknown as the *Prophet*. But if poſſible they ſhould own his *Character*, and take the Subject of his *Embaſſie* into conſideration, That *yet forty days and Ninive ſhall be deſtroy'd*, probably they might repent, and more then probably God would pardon them if they did ſo, and *Ninive* would not be deſtroy'd, and by neceſſary conſequence *Jonas* muſt bear the Ignominy, if a *falſe Prophet*; which once detected, as it muſt be if the Judgment follow not the Sentence, the very *Motive* of their Converſion would prove a dangerous *Temptation* to return to their former Impiety. Wherefore the Prophet finding no

other

other way to avoid the Points of this *Dilemma*, not only flies from the Employment, but alſo hopes to *eſcape from the face of God*; he puts to Sea, makes all the Sail he can, and ſteers his Courſe as wide from the Coaſt of *Aſſyria*, as the Wind and his Fear could bear off. When behold, the Storm he would not prognoſticate to others, was gather'd over his own Head! Beſides his own Guilt, the Divine Hand points him out as the Occaſion of it; yet he chuſes rather to be caſt over-board, then to tack about and make for *Ninive*; and tho' a *Whale* was ready to receive him to that end, yet his *Will* and his *Prayers* ran ſo ſtrong the other way, it was three Days before ſhe could unload her miraculous Burthen upon the deteſted Shore. Jon. 1. 3.

But he was no ſooner out of the *Whales* Belly, then he enters into himſelf; and terrified with the Idea of the Dangers he had paſſed, admiring his own no leſs wonderful Stupidity, and revolving his ſtrange Deliverance, *incredible* almoſt to himſelf,

he joyfully embraces the Employment he had ſo obſtinately refus'd, and abating both of his Zeal and Apprehenſion, he was contented *Ninive* ſhould falſifie his Prediction, and by a timely Repentance prevent the Deſtruction he was going to denounce.

He enters the vaſt City, and ſtopping in one of the moſt frequented Places, he ſummons the Inhabitants, *Adhuc quadraginta dies & Ninive ſubvertetur*; *Yet forty days and Ninive ſhall be no more.* The novelty of the Thing, the ſtrange Figure of the Man, his Mien, as if he had newly riſen from the Dead; the particularity of his Habit, as if he came out of another World; the brokenneſs of his Dialect, ſoon drew the Herd about him, to liſten and gaze a while, and then to laugh; and without doubt the *Wits* and Libertines to rally him, and ſome in Office to threaten him. But the *Preacher* go's on as inſenſible to their Affronts, as they were at firſt to his Doctrine; he follows his Text, and they him, till at laſt, as *Laughing* and *Crying* are perform'd

form'd with the ſame *Muſcles* of the Eyes and Face, ſo the ſame Words which at firſt provok'd their Laughter, now ſpread Sorrow, Fear, and Amazement upon their Countenances, and fetch Tears out of their Eyes, but could not work a *thoro' Reformation* in their Hearts; till the Voice of this *Unknown* penetrated thro' the Town into the Court, and reach'd the Ears of the King, *Pervenit verbum ad Regem Ninive.*

This King had as little reaſon as any of his Subjects to be ſatisfi'd with his own Life, and more reaſon to apprehend the verity of *Jonas*'s Prediction, being conſcious to himſelf into how dreadful a Precipice his ill Example had drawn a People, never ſo Complying, never ſo Obedient to the Prince as in his Vices. In fine, he believes the threatned Judgment ſo much more probable, as he knew it was too much deſerved. He riſes therefore from his Throne, lays by the *Enſigns* of *Majeſty*, puts himſelf in the ſtate and poſture of a Criminal, Preaches and Enjoyns the Pennance

that

that he Practiſes; Faſting and Sackcloth become the Mode, the Court and Town are preſently in it, and follow it with ſo much eagerneſs, vigour and perſeverance, that the Storm which was ready to break upon their Heads, diſperſes of it ſelf, the Heavens clear up, the Anger of God is diſarm'd, and as the Prophet foreſaw, he draws in the menacing Hand.

Let us make a ſtand here, Chriſtians, and reſt a while in Contemplation of a Hiſtory as Inſtructive as it is Aſtoniſhing; a Record of what paſs'd in *Ninive*, an Account of the preſent State of moſt Cities in the World, and I hope a Prophecy of our Repentances. It is like a good Picture, which ſeems to fix the Eye upon every one that regards it. I promis'd not to offend your Ears with any rude Compariſon, or to apply *Cauſticks*, to uſe a burning Iron where a Balſam, a gentle Remedy may work the Cure. Yet I beg leave to put you in mind, that *Ninive* is ſtill threatned, but is not yet deſtroy'd; that it ſurvives in every City whoſe

whoſe Impieties, whoſe Irreligion, whoſe Extortion, whoſe inſatiable Avarice, and deteſtable Luxuries, cry to Heaven for Vengeance, and to avert whoſe total *Overthrow* a *Jonas* is diſpatch'd. *Et plus quam Jonas hîc.* And how far we are ſhort of *Ninive*, how little we want of equalling their Crimes, and *filling up the number of our Sins*, he only can tell *who is more then Jonas*, who numbers the Sands of the Sea.

Ninive a Pagan Town, the Centre and Fountain of Superſtition and Idolatry, buried for ſo many Ages in the darkneſs of Gentiliſm, where the *Sun of Juſtice never ſhone*, the ſaving Faith never ſhed a Beam; amidſt an infinity of Deities without the Knowledge of God, labouring under a double Night, of Infidelity and of the blackeſt Crimes.

But *Ninive* at the Preaching of a *Jonas*, a meer Stranger, without any thing to make himſelf Conſiderable; a Man never heard of before, a Man contemptible for his Perſon,

ſon, with Diſtraction and Amazement in his Countenance, ſtill frothy and reeking from the Belly of the Whale; without any Credentials or Proof of his Miſſion, without any Miracle to back his Doctrine, or other Teſtimony to ſupport it, then what he gave himſelf; and this to a People ſo little prepar'd to receive it, that in all likelihood, he might as well have Preach'd to the Rocks and Waves, from the Entrails of the Leviathan. Yet this *Unknown* Preacheth, theſe Infidels Believe, theſe wicked Men, theſe Monſters of Nature, even *Sardanapalus* is Converted: *Sardanapalus* ſheds manly Tears, *Sardanapalus* do's Pennance; ſuch exemplar Pennance, that the Holy Ghoſt thought it material to tranſmit each Circumſtance to Poſterity; *Surrexit de Solio*, ſays the Text, *He riſes from his Throne*, he deteſts that *unfortunate* Power which enabled him to ſin without *controll: Abjecit veſtimentum*, he caſts the Purple from his Shoulders, which he had not only ſtain'd, but even drench'd with his repeated Crimes: *Indutus eſt Sacco*, he changes it for Sackcloth,

Sackcloth, to chaſtiſe that Fleſh he had ſo pamper'd and indulg'd: *Et ſedit in cinere*, and is not contented till his Mortification is accompanied with the profoundeſt Humility; and therefore he proſtrates and rowls himſelf in Aſhes. *Res admiratione digna, &c.* (cries St. *John Chryſoſtom*) O what a Spectacle! delightful and new to the Heavens, and worthy the Admiration of the whole Earth! Sackcloth and Haircloth imperiouſly invade and baniſh the Purple; Aſhes and Duſt tarniſh the luſtre of the Crown. He had Sinn'd, and he Repents like a King. He reſolves the Example, which had been ſuch an Incentive to *Vice*, ſhould be no leſs exciting to *Repentance*. He depoſes the Marks, but not the Power of a King. His Obedience to the Voice of God, do's not abate of his Authority with his People: While he lies proſtrate as a *Criminal*, he Enacts Laws, and Enjoyns a ſolemn Faſt thro' all his Dominions; *Homines & jumenta non guſtent quicquam.* And when did he iſſue forth this *Proclamation*? after he

had call'd a Board to debate it, after he had taken the thing into Deliberation, or Advis'd with his Council and Sages? No, ſays the Text, *Et pervenit Verbum*, as ſoon as this Word came to his Ear, without ballancing, without heſitation, *Motu proprio*, immediately at the very inſtant he falls to work: He was already doing Pennance while he was commanding it; binding his People to comply firſt by *Example*, and then by *Precept*.

But where is it that I ſpeak? Is it not to a Chriſtian Aſſembly, to a Chriſtian Town, an ancient Theatre of Religion, and once the Metropolis of this Kingdom as well in Piety as in Grandeur and Commerce? Is it not to a Court once Peopled with Saints, once a Nurſery of Heaven, illuſtrastrated with the Morning-brightneſs of the Goſpel, and reflecting its Light thro' the whole World? Is it not before the Succeſſor of St. *Lucius*, the firſt Chriſtian King, and to the firſt Chriſtian Kingdom of the *Weſtern* World? Is it not to a People

ple early Born into, and long Educated in the Boſom of the Church, having Kings for *Nurſing Fathers*, and Queens for *Nurſing Mothers*, nouriſh'd with the *Bread of Heaven*, and the *Fat of the Earth*? and yet amidſt ſuch an overflow of Divine Bleſſings, ſuch infallible Helps, ſuch efficacious Sacraments, ſuch moving Exhortations, we remain unſhaken to the Menaces, inſenſible to the Promiſes, rebellious to the Light, and deaf to the Voice, not of a *Jonas*, but of a *JESUS*. One unknown Preacher Converted the moſt Heatheniſh, the moſt corrupted, the moſt populous City of the World, at one Sermon; while we who ſpeak your own Language, nay even your own Sence; Preach what you believe, and Menace what you apprehend; ſpeak what you know to be juſt and reaſonable; We, whoſe *Miſſion* you acknowledge, whoſe *Character* you reverence, whoſe *Authority* you do not diſpute, Think it a great Victory if we

Convert the meaneſt of this crouded Auditory, after a *hundred* Sermons. And do you wonder that the *Ninivites ſhall riſe in the day of Judgment againſt* this more *Criminal*, (I muſt ſay it) becauſe more *Obdurate* Generation; which amidſt ſo much knowledge of its Duty, amidſt ſuch preſſing Motives, ſuch ſtrong Convictions, ſuch cogent Arguments, ſuch illuſtrious Examples, puts off its Repentance from day to day? But to preſs this is my Second Point.

II. Eccleſ. 5. 8. It was a notable Advice, and becoming its Author, the wiſeſt of Men, *Non tardes converti*; *Do not ſlacken to be converted to our Lord, nor put it off from day to day.* For one of the moſt crafty Slights of the Devil to keep an unhappy Soul in his poſſeſſion, one of the falſeſt Steps we make, one of the moſt dangerous Errors we ſlide into, is the deferring our Repentance from time to time, till it be paſt *time*. An Error not only

only moſt pernicious, becauſe in the higheſt Concern, but alſo the moſt wicked, as proceeding not from Surpriſe, Weakneſs, Inadvertence, or Ignorance, (the Heads whence other Miſtakes ariſe) but ſpringing from the moſt affected Wilfulneſs, and downright Malice. People will not believe daily Experience, will not credit their common Senſe, will not hearken to their own Reaſon and Conviction; but in deſpite of Senſe, Reaſon, Conſcience, and Experience, will ſtill perſiſt in a vain and groundleſs Preſumption, That *after forty days their Ninive ſhall not be deſtroy'd*; that they ſhall have a much longer time to repent in. Yet you ſee Funerals paſs every day under your Windows, you meet them in the Streets; you behold your Friends, your Children, your Husbands and your Wives expiring under your Roofs, giving up the Ghoſt in your Arms; you ſee them die, who had as much reaſon to promiſe themſelves a longer Date of

Life;

Life; you ſee them die, you ſee *Ninive* fall, (for when one dies, all the World dies to him) you ſee them die unprepar'd, one without any ſenſe of a future Life, another in Deſpair; one is ſuddenly cut off, another falls in a Duel, in Drink, in Adultery: And theſe are dreadful, but late and almoſt daily Examples. You ſee them die impenitent, and hear them bid you beware of the ſame Preſumption, which brought them to their eternal Ruine; and yet you are deaf to all Perſuaſions. And if you will be ſo, who can help it? But then you muſt not wonder that the *Ninivites* ſhall riſe at the Day of Judgment againſt you; for they repented at the Preaching, at the firſt Sermon of *Jonas*. Beſides, they had forty days allow'd them to prevent their Ruine; but you hear Truth it ſelf proteſting, that you neither *do*, nor *ſhall know*, not only a certain Period of days to prepare your ſelves in, but not ſo much as *one day*, no *not an hour*; *Neſcitis diem neque horam.*

Matth. 25. 13.

horam. You hear the Judge menacing that Death, that Judgment ſhall ſteal upon you *like a thief in the night*, that is, when you reſt ſecurely, and dream of no ſuch thing; when you are diſſolv'd in your Pleaſures, when you are intoxicated with Wine, when you are extended in Wantonneſs, that even this Night perhaps your Soul ſhall be raviſh'd from you, *Stulte hâc nocte, &c.* and yet in the ſound of this dreadful Alarm, in ſight of the threatning Hand which is writing your Sentence upon the Wall of your Chamber, upon the brink of this frightful Precipice you lie as ſupinely, as unconcern'd, as *if you had the Works of the Juſt*, or rather as if you were already dead, and aſleep, not in your Beds, but in your Graves, *Ad tantum tonitruum qui non evigilat, non dormit, ſed mortuus eſt.*

Apoc. 16. 15.

Luc. 12. 20.

Aug.

This Stupidity, this affected Inſenſibility of ours, provok'd our Bleſſed Saviour to ſuch a Degree, that, contrary

trary to his uſual Meekneſs, he calls ſuch People *Fools*, *Stultos*, inſenſate, ſtupid, brutiſh, and irrational, beyond all that can be imagin'd. Your God is your *Accuſer*, and the *Ninivites* are your *Judges*; but you pronounce the Sentence upon your ſelves; all the other Actions of your Life are your Condemnation. For who of you all is ſo ſenſeleſs as to truſt the ſmalleſt Temporal Concern to ſo great a hazard, as to expoſe your Life and your Eſtate, when you may eaſily ſecure and enjoy both the one and the other, and to run the riſque of loſing all, for want of a little Care, of Compounding for a ſmall Fine, a little Trouble, a well-tim'd Sigh, or a ſeaſonable Tear? Should your Houſe take Fire, and your Friends and Neighbors run in to give you notice of it, before the ſpreading Flame has taken hold of the main Timber; would you phlegmatickly reply, There is no haſte in the Buſineſs, it will be time enough to bring the Engines when

when the Fire has reached the Foundations? Would a Man need a great Stock of Philoſophy to convince you that you are a *Fool*, or a Madman, which is all one, ſince Madneſs is but a *raging Folly?* Why, your Soul is all in a Flame with a long Habit of Sin; *Ignis in oſſibus*; you are burnt up with unlawful and lawleſs Deſires, with Paſſions more raging and more deſtroying then Fire. The *Preacher* comes as a Friend to advertiſe you of it, bids you make haſte to ſtop the Conflagration, leſt it ſwallow you up in *unquenchable Flames.* You bid him not trouble you with that yet a while, Thirty or Forty years hence perhaps you may give him a hearing, that is to ſay, ſpeaking your Senſe in the other Circumſtance, Let me alone till the Fire has inſinuated it ſelf into the very Heart of the Building, till it has taken ſuch hold upon me, that it will be impoſſible to lay it, impoſſible to reſcue me from the devouring Element, beyond hopes of your Aſſiſtance,

or Power to help my ſelf, when Horror reigns without, and Confuſion within, till I know not where I am, what to do, which way to turn me, which way to go about to draw Tears out of my parched Eyes, or preſs Sorrow out of my petrified Heart, which is the only Water can quench the Criminal Flame.

Stulte! Fooliſh and inſenſate Man! Should you find your ſelf overcharg'd with a heavy Burthen, which even grows upon your Shoulders, and which you are oblig'd to carry, or ſink; would you refuſe to ſtir a Step while you are in the Flower of your Age, in the height of your Strength? Would you tell ſuch as adviſe you to *work while it is yet day, before night come upon you*, to get to your Journeys end as ſoon as you can, That it is time enough, you will begin when you grow Old? that is to ſay, you will begin when you ſhould end, when your Nature is decay'd,

John 9. 4.

cay'd, your Spirits exhauſted, your Nerves debilitated, and have more need of being carried your ſelf. Sinner, your Crimes are a great Load: *Sicut onus grave gravata ſunt ſuper me*; Even your God, *the Strong one of Iſrael*, groans under the Weight, he can bear them no longer; he gives you warning that he is juſt ready to withdraw the Hand of his long-ſuffering patience, and leave you to your ſelf; *Unuſquiſque onus ſuum portabit.* 'Tis in your own choice whether you will, now you have ſtrength and opportunity, work them off, and lay them down at the foot of the Croſs, by embracing a Penitential Life, or ſweat under them till they ſink you into Hell. And do you ſtill deliberate upon the Point? Is the Matter ſo difficult, is the Caſe ſo perplex'd, that you cannot tell which Party to take? or rather, is not the Neceſſity ſo evident, ſo preſſing, ſo irreſiſtible, that to demur one Day upon it, is to renounce as well your *Senſes* as your *Faith*, as well your

Pſal. 37. 5.

Gal. 6. 5.

Reaſon as *Religion*? You promiſe your ſelves late Years to repent in, when you have not the aſſurance of one Day; Is not this as great a Shock to *Reaſon*, as it is an Affront to *Religion*? Is it not to invade the Prerogative of God, by *placing the times and moments in your own power and diſpoſition*? And certainly thoſe Purpoſes of Repentance you ſo much relie on, thoſe Reſolutions you ſo often break and ſo often renew, thoſe Promiſes which have ſo often deceiv'd both your ſelf and your Confeſſor, cannot be true, real and unfeigned, if the *Term* you aſſign be falſe and imaginary. But there is no ſuch thing as *Forty years hence*, there is no ſuch thing as *Twenty years hence*, there is no ſuch thing as *To morrow*: Procraſtinated Repentance is *nothing*, but a preſent Impenitency.

Now go and complain you are hardly dealt with, you have not time allow'd you to *repent*, becauſe you have not more

more Years allow'd you to *offend*: Complain that the *Ninivites* had more favour ſhew'd them then you have, becauſe they had *Forty days*, and you have had *Forty years*. Quarrel with the Divine Providence, becauſe *they* were call'd, and repented the *firſt day*; you were call'd the firſt, and think much to repent on the laſt. Be very angry at the Preacher for diſcompoſing you, and ſtopping you ſhort in the career of your Sins, with a Whiſper in your Ear, That the Term is juſt expiring, that the Sword is unſheath'd over your Head, and the Hand of Vengeance is lifted up to give you the fatal Blow: Tell him he is troubleſom and impertinent, becauſe he does you the beſt Office in the World, and bid him go Preach to *Ninive*.

He has done, and is ready to leave the *Chair*; but aſſure your ſelves, the Men of *Ninive* will immediately ſucceed in his Place; you ſhall not be able to impoſe Silence upon them, their Voice

Voice ſhall ring in your Ears, either till their Preaching convert, or their Sentence burſt your Hearts. They ſhall follow you thro' all the windings and mazes of Sin, they ſhall meet you in every crooked path which themſelves traced out, and you follow; They know your Haunts, which themſelves frequented; They ſhall meet you at the Theatre, at the Maſquerade, at the Rendezvouz, at the Gaming-houſe, at the Tavern; They ſhall inſinuate themſelves in your Cabinets, and your moſt ſtudied Receſſes ſhall not exclude them. *Clamabunt etenim & non ſilebunt*; Their *Sackcloth* ſhall confound your Niceneſs and Gallantry; Their *Aſhes* ſhall condemn your Pride and Vanity; Their *Faſting* ſhall upbraid your Gluttony and Drunkenneſs; Their *Humiliation* ſhall check your Ambition; Their *Sighs* ſhall play the Ground to your Muſick and Merriment in this time of Sorrow; Their *ready Obedience* to the Voice of the *Preacher*, ſhall exprobrate

probrate the inſenſibility of your ſeared Hearts; And their *Examples* ſhall give the Lye to all your Excuſes. In fine, thoſe lamentable Cries of Men, Women, Children, and Animals, ſuing to the Throne of Mercy to prevent the Overthrow of that City, ſhall cry Vengeance againſt this, and eccho it thro' the whole World, that God deſires not the Damnation of *Chriſtians*, who was ſo Merciful to *Heathens*; That you deſerve indeed not ſo much warning, becauſe your whole Life has been one continued Advertiſement; That becauſe they offended againſt the Law of Nature, they deſerv'd an Eternity of Suffering, and to paſs out of one Darkneſs into another: But becauſe you have openly reſiſted the Holy Ghoſt, *Rebelles lumini*, Miſerable, not for want of Light, but Impious becauſe you rebell'd againſt it, you have merited the *Outward darkneſs*, the *Nether hell.* Yet to ſhew that *God wills not the death of a Sinner, but rather that he ſhould be converted*

verted and live; *Extendit terminos tuos*, He ſuſpends the Sentence of your Condemnation till the remainder of this *Forty days*, this *Penitential Seaſon* is elapſed; and ſends his *Prophets*, the *Interpreters of his Word*, to acquaint you with the peremptory Term.

And now to ſum up this Diſcourſe, as Moſes did all his Remonſtrance to
Deut. 30. 19. the People of *Iſrael*, *Teſtes invoco hodie cœlum & terram, quod propoſuerim vobis vitam & mortem*, &c. *I take heaven and earth to witneſs, that I have propoſed to you life and death*, and ſet the Bleſſings and the Judgments of God before your Eyes, and within your reach, to ſtretch out your Hand to which you pleaſe; The *Heavens*, which are Peopled with Saints,
Mat. 13. 17. who *deſir'd to ſee thoſe things which you ſee, and did not ſee them; to hear thoſe things which you hear, and did not hear them*; who were deſtitute of the many Advantages which you enjoy; The *Earth*, a great part of whoſe Inhabitants is ſtill cover'd

cover'd with *Egyptian* Darkneſs, and involv'd in the Sins of *Ninive*, yet at the firſt Sermon would repent in *Sackcloth and Aſhes*. And I call even *Hell* to witneſs, which is Throng'd with ſo many juſtly Condemn'd for Crimes incomparably leſs then you daily commit; That God has not been wanting on his part, that the Bowels of his *Mercy* are as fruitful, that his *Arms* are as much extended, that his *Heart* is as open, that his *Call* is as vigorous, that his *Hand* is as powerful and as ready to ſave this Generation, as when he pardon'd the *Ninivites*, whom we Copy in our Vices, and who ſit to us as a perfect Model of a *hearty*, of an *exemplar*, and of a *ſpeedy* Repentance,

Which God of his infinite Mercy, &c.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the First Sermon Preach'd before their Majesties at *Windsor*, *pag.* 18, & 19. are these following Clauses. *And tho' Almighty God, by inforcing this Precept* (of the Love of Himself) *with so many almost Synonimous Words, intended principally to sink this First and Greatest Commandment deeper into our Hearts; yet it has produc'd so contrary an Effect, even in the Minds of Learned Men, that some have not wanted Confidence to pronounce the Commandment Impossible.*] This Sermon was Printed in the Words it was spoke, (tho' some endeavour to persuade the contrary;) I alledg'd no Authors then, and thought the Critical Reader would not have call'd upon me, to produce those *Learned Men*, it being the Doctrine in so many late Writers, and so much insisted on, and so frequently repeated by *Martin Luther*; *Qui negat Deum nobis impossibile jussisse, pessimè facit, & qui hoc falsum esse dicit, plusquam pessimè facit: He that denies God hath commanded what is impossible, do's very ill; and he that says, This is false, do's still worse.* And he instances in the Commandment of the Love of God with all the Heart, &c. and *Non concupisces, Thou shalt not covet*; which he frequently declares cannot be observ'd in this Life. It follows in the Sermon, *Indeed if he that lays it upon us, did not withal promise us Strength to perform it*, Pelagius *and his Followers would never have been condemn'd for that Doctrine.* Where it is visible

Cens. Paris. de Præc. Legis Prop. 1.

ble *That* is put for *Their*, by an overſight of the Corrector; the Senſe of the two Clauſes being, That if God, who lays the Commandment upon us, did not give us Grace to perform it, neither *Luther*, &c. would have err'd in declaring it Impoſſible, nor *Pelagius* have been condemn'd for teaching, That it might be fulfill'd by the Strength of Nature, without the Aſſiſtance of Grace: For, take away the Efficacy of Grace, it matters not which of the two Opinions prevails, whether the *unperforming* Grace of *Luther*, or the *No-Grace*, or at the moſt the *non-neceſſary* Grace of *Pelagius*. This is the Senſe of the Propoſition; and it could be no other; my Buſineſs being to ſhew how the Doctrine of the Church runs between theſe two Extreams (an Impoſſibility with Grace, and a Poſſibility without Grace); *Non enim Deus impoſſibilia jubet, ſed jubendo admonet, & facere quod poſſis, & petere quod non poſſis: For God do's not command impoſſible things; but by his Command he admoniſheth us to do what we can, and to call upon him to enable us in what we cannot do.* Aug. de Nat. & Grat. c. 43.

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Second Sermon Preached before the King and Queen, and Queen Dowager, at Their Majeſties Chappel at St *James's*, *November* 1, 1685. By the Reverend Father *Dom. Ph. Ellis*, Monk of the Holy Order of S. *Benedict*, and of the *Engliſh* Congregation. Publiſhed by his Majeſty's Command. *Quarto.*